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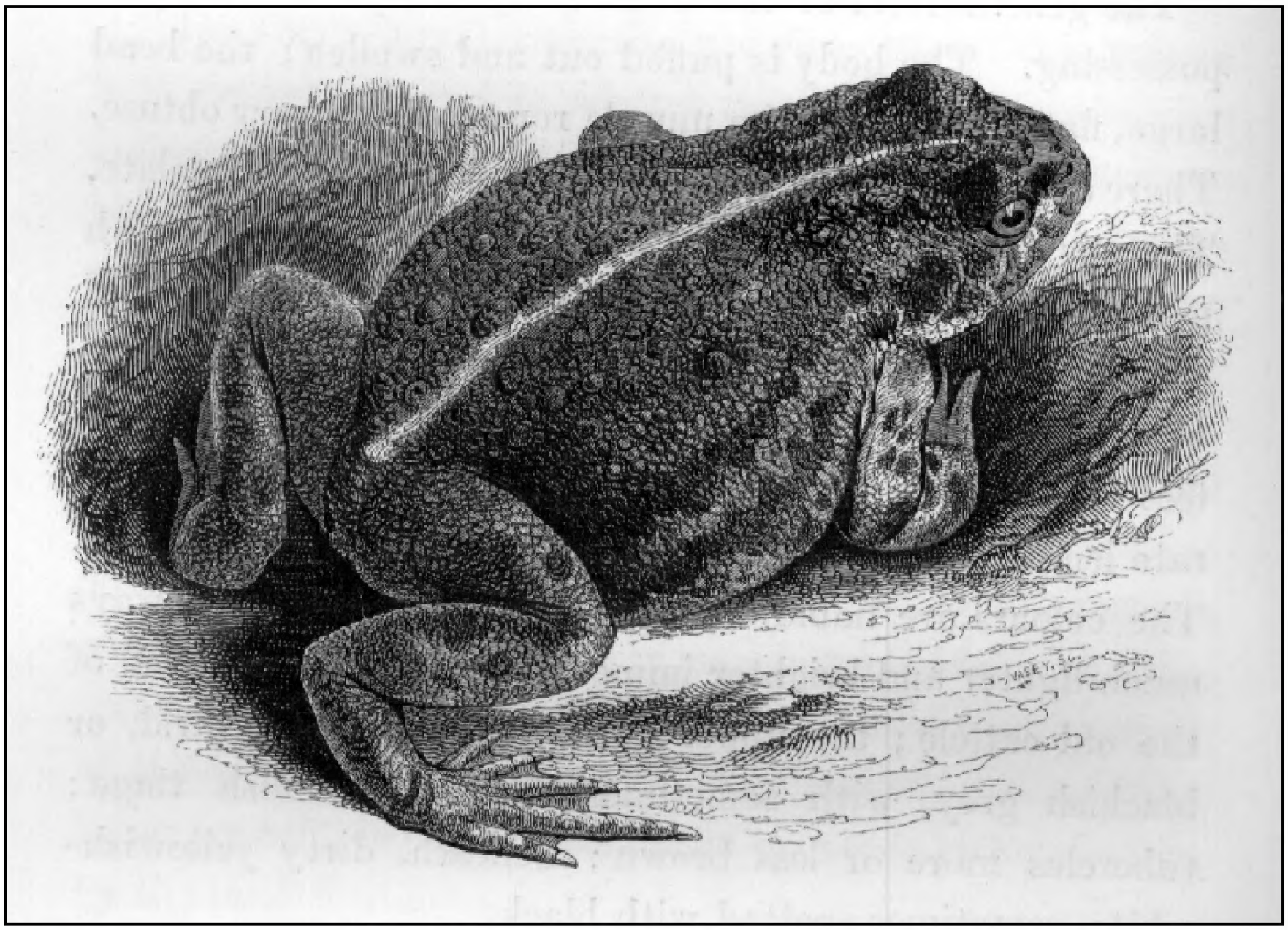

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The Heart of the Matter: An Unfortunate *Thamnophis sirtalis*

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Four hours of my Sunday are donated to the Fox Valley Wildlife Center in Elburn, Illinois. Sunday afternoons have a tendency to attract many interesting cases: more people are outside, apt to stumble upon injured wildlife, and almost all veterinary hospitals in the area are closed. The wildlife center has no exotic vet on staff, so often patient stabilization is achieved through the experience of the volunteers and staff who are present and an open book next to the table until the exotic veterinarian can be contacted.

On 10 October 2004 a *Thamnophis sirtalis* (common garter-snake) was brought to the center after being found on a local resident's driveway. The snake was not lethargic, nor was it actively bleeding. Visual exam found a shallow laceration on the left side of the jaw that was half an inch long, and a larger shallow laceration 2 inches from the head on the right side of the body that was four tenths of an inch long. Protruding from the laceration on the right side of the body was the ventricle of the heart! There was no visible debris on the heart, and it was in good condition. The organ was flushed in Lactated Ringer Solution (LRS) to hydrate the tissue and keep it vital. The wound was too tight around the heart to place the heart back in the chest, even when contracted, but not much effort was put into this for fear of injuring the specimen more. The subject was given an intramuscular dose of Enrofloxacin in the upper third of its body. The snake's entire body was flushed with LRS in an attempt to remove debris. The specimen was placed on a sterile gauze pad soaked with LRS and betadine in a small plastic container to restrict movement and further exposure.

Twenty-four hours later the specimen was brought to an exotic veterinarian for medical attention. The specimen was anesthetized with Rapinovet, which was given IV until the patient was unconscious. The wound was enlarged slightly and the heart was placed back into the chest cavity in less than fifteen minutes. Three Prolene sutures were placed in an everting pattern to close the incision. The patient woke up well, and without incident. Two hours after the surgery the patient was found to have expired due to internal blood loss. The pressure from the skin acted as a tourniquet to a site of damage, and it did not begin to bleed until after the pressure was relieved by replacing the heart.

Common gartersnake, *Thamnophis sirtalis*, with its still-beating heart protruding from a wound on the right side of its body.

The exposure of the heart is thought to have occurred after the initial laceration was inflicted. There was no visible exterior damage to the left side of the chest to suggest traumatic force pushed the organ out, nor was there was any internal bruising in the muscle on the left side. The ribs of the right side were intact, also without bruising to the surrounding muscle. The wound was very tight around the organ, it would have been impossible for it to have exteriorized without force being applied to it. One theory of how the heart was exposed was that after the two lacerations were inflicted, the subject fed. The undulation associated with the peristalsis of swallowing prey could produce a force strong enough to externalize the heart. The stomach contents were not significant, but were examined microscopically. However the intestines were full of dark, muddy, partially digested material. Upon microscopic examination of the material it was found to contain clear hair-like structures, possibly setae. This could suggest it was the remains of some sort of worm, possibly an annelid. The digestion rate in snakes is obviously dependent on a number of variables, but the presence of material in the gut could support the theory of undulation forcing the heart out. All major organs, and the entire surgical site have been preserved in formalin, and all slides that were examined have been kept for reference.

Acknowledgments

Surgery was performed, and donated by David J. Bongiorno D.V.M. of Millbrook Veterinary Hospital, Geneva, Illinois. Initial care and stabilization was provided by the Fox Valley Wildlife Center, Elburn, Illinois. Special thanks to Jace Robinson and Theresa Wusterbarth for their guidance and information.

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2004 Snakes from Sonora, Chihuahua and Coahuila, Mexico

Hobart M. Smith,[1] Julio A. Lemos-Espinal[2] and David Chiszar[3]

Abstract

Thirty-seven species and subspecies of snakes are recorded from the states of Sonora, Chihuahua and Coahuila, Mexico. Of special interest are *Crotalus s. scutulatus* (specimen with 3 intersupraocular scales), *C. willardi silus* (range extension), *Diadophis punctatus dugesii* (first record for Sonora, discussion of taxonomic status), *Gyalopion quadrivirgatum* (range extension), *Hypsiglena ochrorhyncha chlorophaea* (new combination, synonymization of *H. o. janii*), *H. torquata* (range extension, species status), *Lampropeltis knoblochi* (pattern variation), *Masticophis flagellum cingulum* (first record for Chihuahua), *M. mentovarius striolatus* (comparisons with sympatric *M. f. cingulum*), *Micrurus d. distans* (description of 2nd specimen known from Chihuahua), *Phyllorhynchus browni fortitus* (resurrection), *Pituophis d. deppei* (first record for Sonora, third specimen from a known locality in Chihuahua), *Procinura aemula* (pattern variant), *Tantilla nigriceps* (range extension).

The specimens reported herewith were collected by JLE during the summer of 2004, and are in the Herpetological Collection of the Unidad de Biología, Tecnología y Prototipos (UBIPRO), Laboratorio de Ecología, Facultad de Estudios Superiores, UNAM, Iztacala, Mexico state, Mexico.

Arizona elegans expolita Klauber. Three, all from Coahuila: 12340, Charcos de Risa (26°12′32.7″N, 103°6′24.0″W), 1114 m; 12343, Químicas del Rey (27°1′13.2″N, 103°21′49.8″W), 1051 m; 12410, Cueva del Tabaco, mpio Matamoros (25°33′54.0″N, 103°5′47.0″W), 1133 m. All localities are near the eastern edge of the range of this subspecies. The midbody scale rows are 27 in all.

Boa constrictor imperator Daudin. Nos. 12973-4 are from El Guamuchito, nr Chínipas, Chihuahua (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m.

Chionactis palarostris palarostris Klauber. No. 12130, 97 km S Puerto Libertad, Sonora (28°53′56″N, 111°52′4.1″W), 170 m. This locality lies within the known range of the species (Mahrdt et al., 2001).

Crotalus atrox Baird and Girard. No. 12154, Ejido San Juanico, Sonora (28°23′36.8″N, 111°19′52.2″W), 0 m; 12155, nr Ejido San Juanico, Sonora (28°21′31.2″N, 111°20′14.3″W), 0 m; 12247, Zona del Silencio, Coahuila (26°46′32.5″N, 103°13′32.2″W), 1236 m; 12294, halfway betw Sierra de En Medio and Rancho Los Nogales, Chihuahua (31°9′51.1″N, 108°34′40.3″W), 1427 m; 12344, Charcos de Risa, Coahuila (26°12′32.7″N, 103°6′24.0″W), 1114 m; 12345, 12412, Sierra Texas, nr Cueva del Tabaco, Coahuila (25°33′54.0″N, 103°5′47.0″W), 1133 m; 12414-5, nr Dunas de Bilbao, mpio Viesca, Coahuila (25°25′36.7″N, 102°53′40.2″W), 1540 m; 12505, 10 km S Químicas del Rey, Coahuila (26°57′46.2″N, 103°21′3.3″W), 1085 m; 12802, 12954, Ortiz, Sonora (28°17′23.9″N, 110°43′0.8″W), 103 m. All localities lie within the known range limits of the species.

No. 12802 was exceptionally colorful in life, with a bright yellow ground color and black diamonds.

Crotalus basiliscus (Cope). Two, from Chihuahua: 12983, Huisivo, and 12984 (skin), San Antonio, both in the immediate vicinity of Chínipas (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m. The large adult has a brownish tail with faint darker rings. The tail of the skin is black above, but much lighter, gray-brown below. The species is known in Chihuahua only from the vicinity of Chínipas.

Crotalus cerastes cercobombus Klauber. All specimens are from Sonora: 12108, 35 km N Kino (29°4′8.1″N, 111°44′26.0″W), 56 m; 12109, 5 km N Kino (28°53′41.5″N, 111°42′53.9″W), 27 m; 12110, N Kino (28°58′44.8″N, 111°38′18.5″W), 55 m; 12121-3, 12125, Calle Carrizal (28°59′18.5″N, 111°43′46.4″W), 64 m; 12128, 103.9 km S Puerto Libertad (29°90′21.5″N, 111°42′51.9″W), 79 m; 12131, 34 km E Bahía Kino (28°49′46.3″N, 111°46′42.8″W), 15 m; 12135, 137.1 km S Puerto Libertad (29°1′25.3″N, 111°43′56.1″W), 343 m; 12333, Puerto Libertad rd, Calle Coyoacán (28°58′32.8″N, 111°38′15.1″W), 43 m. All localities are well within the known range of the subspecies.

Crotalus lepidus klauberi Gloyd. No. 12342, Cañón del Oso, Sierra de San Luis, mpio Janos, Chihuahua (31°16′17.7″N, 108°43′7.0″W), 1661 m. The pattern closely resembles that of the specimen from Sierra del Nido, Chihuahua, in Campbell and Lamar (2004, pl. 846). A similar pattern occurs in the Maguarichi/Mojarachi area, where local residents call it *chachamuri verde*.

Crotalus scutulatus scutulatus (Kennicott). Eight specimens, all from Coahuila: 12159, Charcos de Risa (26°24′54.6″N, 103°2′17.7″W), 1096 m; 12246, 12248, 12507, Zona del Silencio (12246: 26°38′49.5″N, 103°9′13.4″W, 1084 m; 12248: 26°48′25.3″N, 103°12′57.0″W, 1210 m); 12413, nr Dunas del Bilbao, mpio Viesca (25°25′36.7″N, 105°53′40.2″W), 1540 m; 12499, Químicas del Rey (26°57′46.3″N, 103°21′3.3″W), 1085 m; 12506, Tetas de Juana (26°4′17.8″N, 103°9′0.1″W), 1096 m.

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All localities are well within the known range of the subspecies. All have the typical, large, irregular scales on the snout, an elongate postsupraocular, and 3(5), 4(3) or 5(1) black rings on tail, separated by light tan interspaces. All have a minimum of two scales in a row between the anterior ends of the supraoculars, except for one in which there are 3. That specimen agrees with the others in other diagnostic characters.

Crotalus willardi silus Klauber. No. 12567, Yécora, Sonora (28°22′4.0″N, 108°55′32.6″W), 1545 m. This is the southernmost record of the subspecies in Sonora, extending its range southward in the state about 250 km (Campbell and Lamar, 2004). The head pattern is typical: the supralabial white stripe ends below the eye, and the infralabial white line ends anteriorly on the 4th infralabial.

Diadophis punctatus dugesii Villada. No. 12568 (a flattened DOR with an incomplete tail), Yécora, Sonora (28°22′4.0″N, 108°55′32.6″W), 1545 m. It has 214 ventrals, 8-8 supralabials, apparently 1-1 temporals and 17-17 scale rows. A light collar covering 2 scale lengths lies 1 scale length behind the parietals, and is followed by an equal-sized black border merged with the general dark dorsal color. The ventral surface is yellowish, becoming reddish orange on the posterior quarter of the body and on tail. The 1st dorsal scale row is black except posteriorly where the light ventral color invades the ventral edge of each scale. Several small black dots are situated irregularly on the posterior edge of each ventral scale.

The taxonomy of northern Mexican populations of this genus is not firmly established, but we assign this specimen to *D. p. dugesii*, not previously recorded from Sonora, because of the presence of a neck ring, 17 posterior scale rows, 1-1 temporals and a relatively low number of ventrals. This allocation conforms with Tanner's (1985) concept of the ranges of *Diadophis* subspecies in Chihuahua: *D. p. dugesii* west of the Continental Divide, *D. p. regalis* east of it except in the extreme northwestern corner of the state.

Drymarchon melanurus rubidus. No. 12977 is from Campo Aereo, and 12978 from San Antonio, both nr Chínipas (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m.

Gyalopion quadrivirgatum (Günther). No. 12600, 1 km N Nuri, Sonora (28°6′39.8″N, 109°19′14.8″W, 350 m. A DOR adult lacks a loreal and has 7-7 supralabials and a divided anal. On a reddish-yellow ground color 31 blotches are on body, none fused, all reaching the ends of the ventrals, which are otherwise white, unmarked. The lateral parts of the blotches cover but 1–2 scale lengths, the median part 3–4. Each scale on the lower 3–5 scale rows has a large central white spot. Some scales bordering the median part of the blotches are white, often forming a continuous white border that invades the lateral parts of the blotches. A median row of rounded black spots is on alternate subcaudals.

This specimen extends the known range of the species eastward in central Sonora nearly to the Chihuahua border, to an altitude considerably greater than elsewhere to the west.

Heterodon kennerlyi Kennicott. No. 12963, Rancho Los Nogales (31°10′32.6″N, 108°35′9.7″W), 1461 m. The azygous scales are 3, the loreals 1-1, as is diagnostic of the species. The locality is at the northwesternmost limit of the range of the species in Chihuahua.

Hypsiglena ochrorhyncha chlorophaea Cope. The specimens that we assign to this subspecies came from two widely separated areas, in Sonora and in Coahuila. Those from Sonora are 12338, 94 km S Puerto Libertad (entronque Angostura/Fundición) (29°18′42.7″N. 111°53′34.4″W), 164 m; 12555, nr Fundición (30°31′36.5″N, 109°39′40.8″W), 1377 m; 12557-8, Cumpas (30°2′5.8″N, 109°47′0.4″W), 814 m; and 12598, Nuri (28°6′26.6″N, 109°19′28.1″W), 363 m. One *H. torquata* (q.v.) was taken at the latter locality.

The specimens from western Coahuila are 12252-3, 12508, 53 km S Químicas del Rey (26°38′44.5″N, 103°9′13.4″W), 1084 m; 12416, Cueva del Tabaco (25°33′54″N, 103°5′47″W), 1560 m.

Current nomenclature would assign the Coahuila specimens to *H. ochrorhyncha janii*, the Sonora ones to *H. o. chlorophaea* (Dixon, 1965; Dixon and Dean, 1986; Lemos-Espinal et al., 2004b), based primarily on color and pattern. These samples, however, overlap in both respects. The specimen with the largest and darkest spots (12598) and the one with the smallest and lightest spots (12557) are both from Sonora; the rest of the specimens are intermediate. In all, the dark median nuchal streak reaches the parietals, and is separated from the lateral nuchal blotches in 3 from Sonora, none from Coahuila.

On the basis of these data we regard *H. o. janii* as inseparable taxonomically from *H. o. chlorophaea.*

The name *ochrorhyncha* was restricted to populations in southern Baja California by Tanner (1985), and appears to have been accepted subsequently (Boundy et al., in Crother, 2000). Lemos-Espinal et al. (2004b) elevated *torquata* to species rank, as we here accept it with further data, on the basis of extensive sympatry and absence of intermediates. Given these changes, the name *chlorophaea* has priority over all other names proposed for taxa previously referred to *H. ochrorhyncha.*

Hypsiglena torquata Günther. Two specimens are from Sonora: 12597, Nuri (28°6′26.6″N, 109°19′28.1″W), 363 m; and 12599, Yécora (28°22′4.0″N, 108°55′32.6″W), 1545 m. Both specimens have a well-defined, complete light collar, whitish is 12597, pigmented in 12599. The single dark nuchal blotch has no forward extension in midline, and is separated from the postocular dark bar by 2–4 scale lengths. These specimens extend the known range of overlap with the range of *H. o. chlorophaea* to some 200 km, and support the conclusion by Boundy et al. (in Crother, 2000) that the two taxa are separate species.

Lampropeltis knoblochi Taylor. Nos. 12566 and 12591 are from Yécora, Sonora (28°22′4.0″N, 108°55′32.6″W), 1545 m. The species was recorded from the same locality by Tanner (1983), and has not been recorded from elsewhere in the state.

The specimen is typical in having an irregular lateral light line along dorsal scale rows 1–2, and 46–50 narrow, white bands (or reddish-orange blotches) on body, 15–29 on tail. The blotches extend farther laterally (1st or 2nd scale row) than

in the specimen from Maguárichi, Chihuahua, reported by Lemos-Espinal et al. (2003), in which they extended only to scale rows 6–7, where they ended at an irregular lateral white line. However, a lower lateral white line was also present, as in the Sonora specimens, on scale rows 1–2.

Leptophis diplotropis diplotropis (Günther). No. 12985, Huisivo, near Chínipas (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m.

Masticophis bilineatus Jan. No. 12562 is from Cumpas, Sonora (30°2′54″N, 109°47′18.0″W), 780 m; 12975, Campo Aereo, 12976 Huisivo, 12980 Arroyo Las Borregas, 13029 and 13091 Chínipas, Chihuahua, all at 27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W, 469 m.

No. 12952 is a young adult with well-defined lateral stripes anteriorly, not or scarcely visible posteriorly.

Masticophis flagellum cingulum Lowe and Woodin. Three are from Sonora: 12561, nr Cumpas (30°2′5.4″N, 109°47′18.0″W), 780 m; 12803-4 and one unnumbered, Ortiz, Valle de Guaymas (28°17′23.9″N, 110°43′0.8″W), 103 m; and 13122 (head only), Los Barrios betw Palmarito and Nuri (28°8′23.6″N, 109°19′21.9″W), 369 m. One is from Chihuahua: 13091, Chínipas (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m.

The Guaymas specimens are large adults uniform black anteriorly. No. 12561, however, is a juvenile 750 mm TTL, with numerous narrow (1 scale length) irregular transverse dark brown crosslines on a gray-tan background. In some areas the lines appear to delimit vague crossbands 2–3 scales long, separated by more or less equal-sized interspaces. A narrow light line crosses the neck 2–3 scales behind the parietals. The scales on the sides of the head are light-edged (or brown-centered), not black-edged. Numerous scattered black dots are on the under side of the head and continue as two rows of black dots on the ventrals of the neck and fore part of the venter. The spots fade posteriorly and fuse as two dim dark lines extending to near midbody, there disappearing. These patterns are characteristic of the subspecies, and the localities are within its known range.

No. 13091 is a juvenile somewhat more than 265 mm SVL (tail and anus missing) and has the dark bands limited to the anterior half of the body, barely extending onto the ventrals; the posterior half of the boy is uniform brown above. The sides of the head are marked much as in 12561, but the ventral black dots are restricted to a few anterior ventrals. This specimen is the first reported of the subspecies in Chihuahua (see *M. mentovarius* for comparisons with that sympatric species).

Masticophis mentovarius striolatus (Mertens). Nos. 12980, Arroyo Las Borregas, and 13029, Chínipas, Chihuahua, are less than a km apart (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m.

Both specimens have 8-8 supralabials. A large adult is uniform blue-gray above, except for a black tip on most dorsal scales. The head is tan above, lighter on sides but without dark marks. In the juvenile, 310 mm SVL, crossbands extend the length of the body, not on the tail. The interspaces are very narrow, covering half or less the number of scale rows covered by the dark crossbands, not exceeding one scale length. The posterior edge of the labials is conspicuously black on a white background, giving a barred effect. No dark spots are on the venter.

The juvenile is only ~25 mm longer in SVL than the juvenile (13091) of *M. f. cingulum* from the same locality, but is much heavier-bodied, and lacks the bright head and neck markings of the latter. The white crossbar on the neck is absent, and the labials are black-edged (as opposed to brown-centered) and there are no white marks on the other scales on the side of the head (vs their presence on the preoculars, postoculars, temporals and loreals). In addition, in the juvenile *M. m. striolatus* the dorsal blotches extend onto the ventrals for about 1/4 of their length on each side (vs barely reaching their ends).

Micrurus distans distans (Kennicott). No. 12979, Guamuchilito, Chihuahua (27°23′21.9″N, 108°29′5.5″W), 510 m. Eleven complete black rings are on the body, 4 scales long at midline except 6 scales on the nuchal and preanal rings. The white rings bordering each black ring are 1 scale long. The red rings are 5-6 times as long as the spaces between them. The top of the head is black, snout to middle of parietals, the ventral surface white as far posterior as the first ventral. The tail has 4 black rings, separated by short white spaces.

The species is known elsewhere in Chihuahua only at Batopilas, where it was taken over a century ago.

Oxybelis aeneus Wagler. No. 12988 is from Chínipas, Chihuahua, and 13025 from nearby Los Mautos (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m. These localities are at the extreme eastern edge of the range of the species at that latitude.

Phyllorhynchus browni fortitus Bogert and Oliver. Nos. 12596 and 15972 are from Tacupeto, Sonora (28°15′20.5″N, 109°18′1.9″W), 435 m. The locality is about 150 km E of the range limit depicted by McDiarmid and McCleary (1993), although Stebbins (2003) shows a more extensive eastern range limit. Regardless, this locality is the easternmost known for the species in Sonora. Occurrence in Chihuahua is likely.

The dorsal blotches vary from 2 to 4 times the length of the light interspaces, and in this respect agree with the original description in Bogert and Oliver (1945). Although Hardy and McDiarmid (1969) and McDiarmid and McCleary (1993) rejected all four of the described subspecies of *P. browni*, the present specimens and reports in the literature indicate that at least two are readily distinguishable on the basis of the length of the dark blotches: *P. b. browni* (including *P. b. lucidus* Klauber) with blotches little or no longer than their interspaces, and *P. b. fortitus* (including *P. b. klauberi* Shannon and Humphrey) with blotches 2 or more times the length of their interspaces). The two taxa may well be of species rank.

Pituophis catenifer affinis (Hallowell). Four specimens are all from Sonora: one large specimen has no number; 11958, Siete Cerros, E Bahía Kino (28°49′57.4″N, 110°44′41.9″W), 339 m; nr Fundición-Nacozari (30°22′2.6″N, 109°42′4.9″W), 1139 m; 12612, Nuri (28°6′26.6″N, 109°19′28.1″W), 363 m. These localities are all well within the known range of the subspecies.

Pituophis deppei deppei (Duméril). No. 12593, in front of "Los Parajes" restaurant, km 269.5 hwy 16 (Hermosillo-Cd.

Chihuahua), Sonora (26°21′19.6″N, 109°0′14.1″W), 1829 m; 12982, Huicorichi, mpio Chínipas, Chihuahua (27°38′6.5″N, 108°27′51.4″W), 1990 m. The specimen from Sonora is the first of the species known from the state. The species was previously reported from the same locality in Chihuahua (Lemos-Espinal et al., 2004a), and is only the 3rd from a known locality in the state.

Both specimens are adults, with sharply contrasting white spaces between the black or very dark brown blotches anteriorly; posteriorly the spaces are orange or reddish orange. The anterior and posterior blotches are black, the median ones light brown (Huicorichi) or dark brown (Sonora).

Procinura aemula Cope. Eight specimens (12986, 13027-8, 13081-2, 13093, 13103) are from Barrio La Loma, Chínipas (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′36.0″W), 469 m. The variation they exhibit in pattern does not exceed that described by Lemos-Espinal et al. (2004) except for a juvenile (13081) 147 mm TTL, in which the black bands on body are oval and spotlike, barely extending laterally to the 3rd or 4th dorsal scale row. The yellow borders of the black bands are very narrow or indistinguishable from the intervening red bands.

Rhinocheilus antonii Dugès. Six, all from Sonora: 11967, 12132, 8 km W Alamos (27°2′36.0″N, 108°58′39.1″W), 461 m; 12594, 12611, Valle de Tacupeto (28°13′22.8″N, 109°19′5.6″W), 416 m; 12129, 12332, 36 km E Bahía Kino (28°53′49.3″N, 111°36′45.2″W), 31 m. These specimens are described elsewhere (Smith et al., 2004).

Rhinocheilus lecontei lecontei Baird and Girard. Two specimens from Sonora: 12331, 12 km N Bahía Kino (28°56′40.9″N, 111°43′4.8″W), 0 m; 12559, Cumpas (30°2′5.4″N, 104°47′18.0″W), 780 m. These specimens are discussed elsewhere (Smith et al., 2004).

Rhinocheilus lecontei tessellatus Garman. Eight specimens from Coahuila: 12249-51, 12510-1, Zona del Silencio (26°9–51′N, 103°6–20′W), 1082-1158 m; 12341, Charcos de Risa (26°12′32.7″N, 103°6′24.0″W), 1114 m; 12411, 12490, Cueva del Tabaco, mpio Matamoros (25°33′54.0″N, 103°5′47.0″W), 1133 m. This series is remarkably similar to *R. l. lecontei* except for the elevated rostral, narrowed posteriorly. All localities lie well within the known range of the subspecies.

Salvadora deserticola Schmidt. No. 12132, 8 km W Alamos, Sonora (27°2′36.0″N, 108°58′39.1″W), 461 m; Agua Salada (Chínipas), Chihuahua (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m. The latter specimen is from the extreme eastern edge of the range of the species west of the Sierra Madre. The dark stripes are less well defined and lighter in it than usual, their edges irregular, serrate.

Senticolis triaspis intermedia (Boettger). No. 12595, Nuri, Sonora (28°6′26.6″N, 109°19′28.1″W), 363 m; 13079, La Loma (Chínipas), Chihuahua (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.9″W), 469 m. Both localities are within the known range of the subspecies.

Sonora semiannulata semiannulata Baird and Girard. No. 12509, Zona del Silencio, Coahuila (26°38′44.5″N, 103°9′13.4″W), 1084 m. The pattern is an unmarked, uniform tan above, white below. The locality is within the known range of the subspecies.

Sympholis lippiens Cope. No. 13031, Chínipas, Chihuahua (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′36.0″W), 469 m. There is no loreal, and the black head cap extends posteriorly on the midline one scale length posterior to the parietals.

Tantilla nigriceps Kennicott. No. 12321, Zona del Silencio, 53 km S Químicas del Rey, Coahuila (26°38′44.5″N, 103°9′13.4″W), 1084 m. The pointed black head cap extends 2 scale lengths posterior to the parietal. It is slightly indented into the edge of the parietals at the level of the secondary temporal.

This is the only specimen recorded from Coahuila south of the vicinity of the Río Bravo. The species is known, however, from adjacent Chihuahua.

Thamnophis cyrtopsis collaris (Jan). Nos. 13026, 13030, Chínipas, Chihuahua (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m.

Thamnophis cyrtopsis cyrtopsis (Kennicott). Nos. 12592, 12610, 12953, 12964, Yécora, Sonora (28°22′4.0″N, 108°55′32.6″W), 1545 m. This locality lies well within the known range of the subspecies. All specimens are readily distinguished from the *T. c. collaris* of Chínipas by the sharp definition of the lower border of the lateral light stripe throughout its length, especially posteriorly. The snakes were feeding on male *Gastrophryne* congregated in large breeding choruses.

Trimorphodon biscutatus lambda Cope. Two specimens are from Sonora: 12560, Cumpas (30°2′5.4″N, 109°47′0.1″W), 814 m; 12565, entronque hwy 14 and Río Sonora (28°32′28.5″N, 110°7′14.6″W), 498 m. Both localities are within the known range of the subspecies.

Trimorphodon tau tau Cope. No. 11964, nr Guirocoba, Sonora (28°5′57.3″N, 108°44′0.0″W), 346 m; 12981, La Loma (Chínipas) and Chínipas, Chihuahua (27°23′39.9″N, 108°32′9.7″W), 469 m. Both localities are within the known range of the subspecies.

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Addition of a Frog of the Family Megophryidae to the Amphibian Fauna of Pakistan

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Boulenger (1920), following Annandale (1917) included *Rana pleskei* in the amphibian fauna of Kashmir. In 1956 a small frog, SMF 64483 (snout–vent length 31 mm), collected from the village of Lun Bangla (at the border with Azad Kashmir), was deposited in the Senckenberg Museum, Frankfurt, Germany, by the late Dr. Ahsanul Islam (Government College, Natural History Museum, Lahore). Mertens (1969) identified the specimen as *Nanorana pleskei*; later Dubois and Khan (1979) referred the specimen to *Rana vicina*. However, probably due to priority, Mertens's identification was followed by subsequent authors, who included *Nanorana pleskei* in the fauna of Pakistan (Khan, 1980, 2003; Khan and Tasnim, 1987). Later Dubois (1978) assigned the Azad Kashmir specimen and the tadpoles (Annandale, 1917) to *Scutiger nyingchiensis* Fei, 1977, in the family Megophryidae. Sahi and Duda (1986) were confused in quoting the authority of Dubois (1978) to include *Nanorana pleskei* in the fauna of Jammu and Kashmir, rather then *Scutiger nyingchiensis* (Cox's communication, 2004).

N. pleskei is a species of northwestern Yunnan, western Sichuan, and southeastern Gansu, China (Zhao and Adler, 1993). Pakistan and India are not included in its range, so that all references to *N. pleskei* from Pakistan and Kashmir actually pertain to *Scutiger nyingchiensis*. Thus the genus *Scutiger* replaces *Nanorana*, adding a new family, Megophryidae, to the amphibian fauna of Pakistan.

In the following section a short description of the genus *Scutiger* is presented.

Family **Megophryidae** Bonaparte, 1850

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Genus ***Scutiger*** Theobald, 1868

The genus *Scutiger* is characterized by the absence of a distinct tympanum, post-femoral gland and maxillary teeth; two pairs of patches of black cornified spines develop on the chest of males during breeding season.

There are 15 *Scutiger* species represented in China (Zhao et al., 2000), of which one *S. nyingchiensis* extends into Kashmir and northeastern Pakistan.

Scutiger nyingchiensis Fei

Asian lazy toad

1977 *Scutiger nyingchiensis* Fei, Acta Zoologica Sinica 23(1): 54-55.

Type locality: Linzhi, Tibet.

Diagnosis: Long, narrow body, snout–vent length male 51-64 mm, female longer 69 mm. Head flat, wider than long; snout obtuse; nostril between snout tip and eye; pupil vertical; tympanum indistinct; internal naris large without vomerine teeth; first and second finger equal in length; no subdigital tubercles; the tarsometatarsal joint reaches in front of the shoulder; toes half webbed; dorsum tuberculated with 1–7 large spiny warts at middorsum.

Sexually dimorphic, male with strong forelimbs, dark brown nuptial spines on first three fingers, a pair of dark brown spiny chest glands, a large spiny auxiliary gland and spines on the cloacal region.

Dorsum grey olive, with dark brown triangular spots; sides of body light yellowish; limbs spotted; chest and abdomen greenish yellow.

Scutiger nyingchiensis is morphologically distinguished from the Pakistani frogs with hidden tympanum (*Paa vicina*, see key in Khan, 2002) by the absence of dorsal longitudinal folds and having heavily spinulated dorsum, presence of spiny auxiliary and chest glands in male.

Distribution: Subsequent to the specimen from Lun Bagla several specimens of *S. nyingchiensis* have been collected from Gilgit and Dosai Plains by Baig (pers. com., 2004) and the late W. Auffenberg (www.flmnh.ufl.edu).

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Book Review: *Introducción a los anfibios y reptiles del estado de Chihuahua / Introduction to the Amphibians and Reptiles of the State of Chihuahua* by Julio A. Lemos-Espinal, Hobart M. Smith and David Chiszar. 2004. 128 pp. In Spanish and English. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México / Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO) Softcover. ISBN 970-9000-21-7. $24.95

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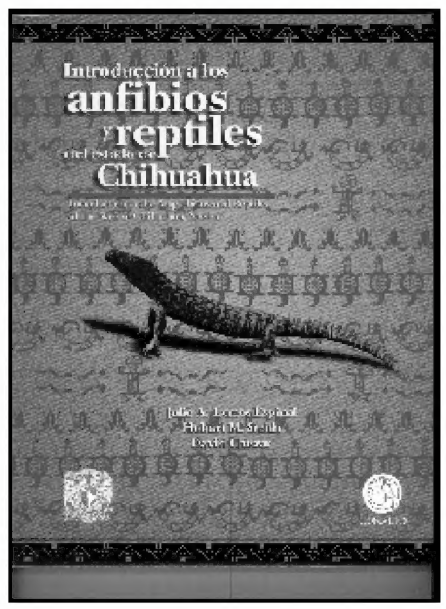
This new book sets the stage for an upcoming companion text on the herpetology of Chihuahua, Mexico. Long considered a leading expert on the herpetology of Mexico, Hobart M. Smith has joined Julio A. Lemos-Espinal and David Chiszar to produce yet another publication on the amphibians and reptiles of this incredibly diverse region. The bilingual text (Spanish section, pages 1-49; English section, pages 75-128) makes the information available to a wide audience.



The introduction to this work details the history of the current project on the herpetofauna of Chihuahua. Hobart Smith, with David Dunkle, initiated these collections in 1934 and the result thus far has been numerous publications and this interim report that summarizes the current state of knowledge of the Chihuahuan herpetofauna. The authors acknowledge the important contributions of W. W. Tanner and James Anderson. The report contains information collected from intensive field studies, from an extensive bibliographic search, and from examination of Chihuahuan amphibians and reptiles in the major herpetological collections in North America.

There is an interesting account of the previous herpetological studies in Chihuahua. The earliest collections were made by Dr. Thomas H. Webb, secretary and surgeon with J. R. Bartlett's expedition from the United States to explore the Mexican frontier. Specimens collected from Chihuahua on this trip during October 1852 were deposited at the U. S. National Museum. Since then numerous field workers have amassed large numbers of amphibians and reptiles from Chihuahua. The authors provide numerous bibliographic citations that can lead the interested reader to the details of these unique and interesting collections.

The next section will make most herpetologists want to travel to Chihuahua. The list of the amphibians and reptiles provided includes Latin name, common name, author and date of original description, and a brief distribution of the species in Chihuahua. The authors have included 186 amphibians and reptiles (species and subspecies), comprising 4 salamanders (2.2%), 28 anurans (15.1%), 11 turtles (5.9%), 65 lizards (34.9%) and 78 snakes (41.9%). Of these, 14 are reported for the first time from Chihuahua and 6 taxa have been described as new by the authors and their collaborators in this project. The species list from Chihuahua is impressive; *Sceloporus* is the most speciose genus (with 18 taxa—but who knows where the systematics of these lizards will go!), followed by rattlesnakes (*Crotalus*) with 12 taxa, and racerunners (*Aspidoscelis*) and gartersnakes (*Thamnophis*) both with 11 taxa. Add exotics such as *Pachymedusa*, *Smilisca*, *Heloderma*, *Boa*, *Micrurus* and *Oxybelis*, and Chihuahua becomes intriguing to most herpetologists.

The authors provide dichotomous keys for the identification of the species of amphibians and reptiles of Chihuahua. For the real novice, there is a key to the orders and suborders. This is followed by a more technical key for each group. There is a key to the genera of anuran tadpoles (always useful for field workers). The keys are well illustrated with 132 figures that include line drawings and photographs. These illustrations were taken from numerous sources, many from classical works of the 1800s. A drawing of *Leptotyphlops*, illustrating the unique head scales, is not often seen in regional herp keys. During this review I did not test the keys by attempting to identify an "unknown" specimen, but hope to do so in Chihuahua one day soon.

The authors suggest there is much to be learned about the distribution and diversity of the Chihuahuan herpetofauna. They provide a detailed listing of 32 unrecorded taxa of possible occurrence in Chihuahua. The most lucrative place to visit in hopes of collecting species new to the state seems to be "the low altitude valleys near the bottom of the steep canyons in the extreme southwestern part of the state." If you can get into this beautifully rugged region look for *Pternohyla*, *Gopherus*, *Agkistrodon* or *Imantodes*. In northeastern Chihuahua look for *Lampropeltis alterna* and *L. triangulum*; in the northwest look for *Sistrurus catenatus*.

The acknowledgments and bibliography for this book seem complete for an introductory text and key of the herpetofauna of Chihuahua. Yet I am certain that when this project reaches fruition the 1½-page Acknowledgments section and the 9-page Literature Cited section will be much more exhaustive and will include extensive references to the natural history of the amphibians and reptiles of Chihuahua.

This book is especially valuable to herpetologists working in northern Mexico and in the arid southwestern United States. For the collector of herp books it has useful information and 136 herp photos to drool over, although some (including *Sce-*

loporus edbelli, *Storeria storerioides*, *Sonora semiannulata*) are of lesser quality. Of the 186 taxa (species and subspecies) reported from Chihuahua, 116 (62%) are illustrated with photos. An addition of a locator map of the region would benefit the geographically challenged. Editing of the book was good; the few typos are very difficult to find. The pages of this book are housed in a durable attractive cover, although I am not sure how the binding would hold up with rigorous field use.

Anyone with an interest in the herpetofauna of Mexico could benefit from owning this book. While the authors admit there is still much to learn in this large and diverse Mexican state, it is a compilation of the current knowledge of the herps of Chihuahua.

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HerPET-POURRI

by Ellin Beltz

Sensationalism abounds

A woman dead of natural causes is not news. A woman dead of natural causes in a house with five dozen snakes is most definitely news. "Animal control officers said most of the 66 animals are poisonous and some may even be deadly. Albuquerque police said the woman took good care of all her pets, but they don't think she had the proper licenses to care for them. . . ." [*The New Mexico Channel*, no joke, April 1, 2005, from MaryBeth Trilling]

Asclepius' staff

Pundits rejoice. A doctor recently wrote the *New York Times* to complain about an illustration for a medical story with two snakes coiled around a pole topped by wings. He wrote that it's a "grievous error." He wrote, "The proper symbol, regardless of what the dictionaries say and what can be seen

flapping on many doctors' coats and letterheads, is the staff of Asclepius, or the Asklepian, which is a stout club with one snake and no wings." The article continued, "In Greek mythology, Asclepius was a half-mortal who had the power to heal the dead. He learned it by seeing a snake he had killed with his staff revived by another snake, which had crammed herbs into its mouth. Using the same herbs, Asclepius saved a man killed by one of Zeus's thunderbolts. (Zeus frowned on that presumption, which also threatened to put his brother Hades, the god of the dead, out of business, so he zapped Asclepius too. Zeus later relented and made Asclepius the god of medicine.)" The two-snake winged staff belonged to Hermes, the messenger—but also the god of thieves. The misuse is either appropriate or inappropriate depending on which side of the stethoscope you are on, it would seem. It's a message perhaps needfully noted by taxpayers, too. "The Army uses the caduceus; the Air Force uses the Asklepian," reports the *Times*. [March 8, 2005]

What's the common theme?

- "State workers have set out traps after a Kona resident spotted a snake slithering up a tree, . . .a brown, 2½- to 3-foot snake. . . . Ten snake traps baited with live mice were set up. . . . Snake sightings on the Big Island are unusual. The last time a snake was caught there was in May 1999 when a 22-inch gopher snake was found at a nursery in Hilo." [*Honolulu Advertiser* (Hawaii), March 5, 2005] Six days later, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported that the snake which was seen was probably not a brown tree snake. [March 11, 2005]

- "The Big Island's shrieking coqui frogs seem to reach their maximum numbers when they live in non-native albizia forests," reports the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, and adds that researchers will "also study the effect on forest ecology of thousands of coquis per acre gobbling up every insect, spider and other small, edible creature. . . . Eradicating coquis is not the direct intent of the study . . . but the researcher opposes their presence in Hawaii because they appear bad for the environment. They might eat spiders that control mosquitoes, and they might eat bugs that birds need, he said. But the big worry is the enormous amount of food that the frogs would represent to snakes, if snakes ever got established on the island." [March 11, 2005]

- Ever inventive, the Australians held a competition to see who could design the best cane toad trap. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has had several stories about it. The first here says "While every state and territory but Tasmania put in an entry before last Monday's deadline, almost half of the 90 designs came from the state where cane toads are al-

ready so widespread they have been adopted as the mascot for the State of Origin rugby league team. Forty-three Queensland inventors put in a bid to be one of the six short-listed entries that will get a $1,000 grant to develop their trap before the final winner is announced in late April. Northern Territory residents had 25 entries, and the sole international competitor sent in an idea from Germany." [March 4, 2005] Meanwhile the same "Northern Territory Government is recruiting residents around Darwin and Palmerston to take up arms in the fight against the cane toad. A household guide on identifying, deterring and disposing of cane toads will be delivered to letterboxes in the city and rural areas over the next week." [March 7, 2005]

Busy month for fossils down under

• *The Australian* (Sydney) reported that "Researchers have discovered a new species of prehistoric crocodile after unearthing 40-million-year-old remains in south-east Queensland . . . consisting of two nearly complete skulls, a lower jaw and bits of legs, ribs and claws. . . . [The remains] have excited researchers who hope to study them to shed light on the evolution of one of the world's most dangerous killers. . . . [This is the] earliest known genus of what's called Mekosuchinae—a big group of extinct crocodiles that dominated Australia and developed a large degree of diversity." [February 23, 2005]

• "The 110-million-year-old fossils of several turtles are the earliest remains of their kind found in Australia . . . [and] are some of the earliest ancestors of modern sea turtles. Paleontologists from the South Australian Museum and the University of Adelaide made the discovery, from the Early Cretaceous period, at a dig near Boulia in western Queensland. [A] research scientist . . . said the fossils suggest the Cheloniidae family of modern turtles had some of their earliest origins in Australia." [Australian Broadcasting Co., February 21, 2005]

Change the textbooks

"Sixteen New Reptile and Amphibian Species Discovered in Vietnam. . . . The announcement was made following joint research conducted by the institute, the Biological Institute of Saint Petersburg (Russia), the American Natural History Museum and the World Wildlife Fund. . . . The newly-discovered species include 14 frog species with scientific names *Rana trankieni* Orlov, *Rana bacboensis*, *Rana daorum* Bain, *Rana hmongorum*, *Rana morafkai*, *Rana banaorum*, *Rana megatympanum*, *Rana iriodes* Bain, *Rana tabaca* Bain, *Chirixalus anajevae*, *Philautus supercornutus*, *Microhyla marmorata*, *Microhyla pulverata* and *Microhyla nanapollexa.* A new species of snake named *Trimeresurus truongsonensis* and a chameleon [Editor's note: actually an agamid lizard of course] called *Bronchocela orlovi* were also listed." [Vietnam News Agency, January 16, 2005]

No more baby food, Steve!

"Steve Irwin's decision to hold his baby son near a crocodile has sparked a review of Queensland government croc enclosure guidelines. The state government today released the new rules prohibiting children and any untrained adult from entering crocodile enclosures. In January last year, Mr. Irwin, the "Crocodile Hunter," held baby son Bob close to a crocodile at his Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast. The incident was captured by television cameras, sparking an international outcry and a review of crocodile handling practices. . . . Australia Zoo, north of Brisbane, declined to comment on the government guidelines." [*The Australian* (Sydney), February 23, 2005] There's also a growing feeling that keepers should enter enclosures only to clean, not to bait and entertain.

Adding reality to injury

"A man bitten by his pet rattlesnake was still hospitalized . . . after his pet western diamondback rattlesnake bit his hand. . . . [LaPorte Hospital] did not have antivenom for a rattlesnake so [he] was transported to . . . Indianapolis . . . in serious condition. . . . [A spokesman for] Indiana Department of Natural Resources . . . explained that precautions must be taken when owning a dangerous animal. `When you're going to own a venomous-type reptile, you've got to be thoroughly trained and have the knowledge to how to handle those.'" [WTHR, Indianapolis, February 23, 2005]

Anything for a buck?

"Eighty-two deadly snakes have apparently been stolen from a Red Cross facility in Bangkok, and police fear they were destined for the stew pot. The 82 King Cobras had been kept with other poisonous snakes . . . where they are milked for their poison to be used as serum for snakebite medicine. On January 13, workers discovered that 32 cobras were missing. A week later, 30 more were gone. After 20 more snakes went missing on February 2, [a] Red Cross veterinarian . . . filed a complaint with the police. Police said Friday they suspect a Red Cross employee stole the cobras, which have never escaped through the steel nets enclosing the cement pits where they lived. . . . Snake is regarded as a delicacy by many Asians . . . particularly Chinese, who believe it has medicinal qualities. Ten workers at the facility were interrogated but denied involvement in the snakes' disappearance. Police planned to question them again next week with lie detector machines. . . ." [*Winnipeg Sun* (Manitoba, B.C.), March 11, 2005]

Nice historical research

Mudpuppies were not native to every East Coast stream. Now a professor has found that: "In Vermont . . . mudpuppies are at the eastern edge of their range. That range centers on the Ohio River drainage. Because they are totally aquatic, if a mudpuppy can't swim to a lake or river from the Ohio River watershed, it probably was never native to it. . . . [Same for the] Connecticut River. Mudpuppies were first described in the river in 1875, yet there is no water link between the Ohio River drainage and the Connecticut River. Could these secretive creatures, which are active at night and are at least as active in the winter as the summer, have been there all along? Were they simply overlooked, in the age before flashlights? While some scientists say that is so . . . a herpetologist at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst . . . read a lot of old scientific papers in an effort to solve the mystery. . . . In 1842, a scientist named James DeKay wrote that there were no mudpuppies in the Hudson River or its tributaries, but that he

expected to find them soon after the Erie Canal connected the Hudson to the St. Lawrence River watershed, where mudpuppies are native. . . . Introduced species usually go through an initial spike in population. . . . Sure enough, in the 1890s, mudpuppies were abundant enough in the Hudson River that they gushed out of fire hydrants in Albany, New York. There was a similar explosion of mudpuppies in the Connecticut River around 1930. Richmond found a record of mudpuppies clogging pipes at the Connecticut River oxbow in Northampton, Massachusetts. That the mudpuppy population in the Connecticut River appears to be centered near Amherst, Massachusetts . . . is an important clue. . . . The mudpuppies in the Connecticut River are salamanders with a college education. Mudpuppies are commonly used as laboratory animals and for dissections. Apparently, they offer a little variety to students who have already aced their frog dissections. These study animals sometimes escape and sometimes get dumped into the nearest body of water. There is good documentation of escaped mudpuppies, destined for use in Colby College classes, making a home in a series of lakes in Maine. [Perhaps] Connecticut River mudpuppies are also escapees . . . from science classes at Amherst and Dartmouth colleges. . . . Funding to analyze the DNA of mudpuppies in the river [will] test his theory. [*Rutland Herald* (Virginia), March 6, 2005]

Hello my honey!

Reports of frogs and toads stuck tight in coal, mud balls, concrete, limestone and holes in trees abound. In 1862 "at London's 1862 Great Exhibition was a lump of coal dug from a seam 300 ft below Newport, Monmouthshire. With it was a frog that miners claimed to have found alive, encased in a lump of coal presumably millions of years old. Their claim enraged the naturalist Frank Buckland, who demanded in the *London Times* that the frog be removed from display. As a result, Professor Richard Owen, then superintendent of the British Museum's natural history department, received so many specimens of toads and frogs found in rocks that he appointed his wife to deal with them. Written records of animals, predominantly amphibians, found encased in solid rock date back to at least the 16th century. The usual story is that workmen digging in a quarry or mine find the creatures inhabiting a cavity roughly their own size. Whether they fell down a crack which was then sealed over, were dropped, flowed or blown there as frogspawn, as was once thought, or even placed into the cracks by humans is anyone's guess. . . . In 1771, the French naturalist Louis-Theodore Herissant entombed three toads in plaster cells, themselves encased in wood. Two were alive three years later. In 1825, the Oxford geologist William Buckland found that several toads he had encased in limestone were still living a year later. Biology would support these two examples—the Sonoran Desert toad, *Bufo alvarius*, for example, can spend years hibernating in dry ground. Though this hardly explains cases like that which so enraged Buckland. [London UK *Guardian*, January 20, 2005]

News of the weird

OK, how much stranger can you get than herps anyway? Here's some strangest of the strange from the email box:

- "The right vibrations transform a meek salamander larva into a killing machine. The ` predator' morph, with its larger head and aggressive attitude, is better adapted to grabbing larger prey. Visual, chemical or sound signals can trigger striking morphological changes in a range of aquatic animals and amphibians. [*New Scientist* (London, UK) March 5, 2005]

- "A snake has eaten its own tail. . . . [An American] kingsnake . . . on display at the National Taidong Aquarium in Taiwan . . . had not eaten in 24 hours, mistook his reflection for another snake, and swallowed it [Editor's note: Presumably, the ` it' referred to here is the tail, not the reflection]. After an hour's emergency treatment, the reptile recovered. [*Ananova* (London, UK) March 2, 2005]

- "Research into the origins of venom production has revealed that there are 2,200 species of poisonous snake in the world—2,000 more than previously believed," reports *The Independent*. Most just don't have any way to deliver the tiny drops of specialized proteins they produce and are therefore considered harmless. The others, well, "It is estimated that about five million people each year are bitten by snakes, resulting in about 125,000 deaths. . . . Several treatments, including the widely used anticoagulant Arvin, have already been derived from components of snake venom. According to these findings, therefore, there are thousands more types of snake venom that can be used in medical research than previously thought." The researcher remarked "This makes perfect evolutionary sense. There could not have been a strong selection pressure for the development of advanced pieces of architecture like fangs unless there was already a potent venom worth delivering. Therefore, venom preceded the fang just as the ability to make noise in the primates preceded the voicebox." [March 9, 2005]

Letters

A brief update from our side: We are now the proud owners of 8 acres of land at Agumbe near the Karnataka west coast surrounded by rainforest. It's a herp paradise with everything from forest tortoises to pythons. There's a small farmhouse on the land which is livable (let's see how it does in the monsoon which will drop up to 30 feet of rain on the place—one of the highest in the world = lots and lots of leeches). Our guy, Gowri, who is staying there right now just saw the first wild king cobra on the land—a 12 foot male nonchalantly crawling near the house up toward the spring, our main water source. We are hoping he lives there. And yesterday Gowri was called to catch a 9-foot female in somebody's garden and a big male in another garden about 4 miles down the road. He released them in the forest near us. What we really want to do is radio-track these releasees and see what becomes of them. A guy named Matt Goode in Arizona who's been following radioed rattlers for years and years is all fired up to come over and is looking for the airfare to get here to start something off. Sorry to rattle on, Janaki has gone north up to a place near Bombay to research a leopard story she's been working on for months. There's a big problem of leopards making a comeback and chomping children. In fact I heard a leopard call the other night right here at home! They are almost unknown

around here in recent years. The dogs totally freaked and well they may as favorites on leopard diet (cougars like them too I hear). And talking about dogs, one of ours, a tan mongrel, is a real snake spotter. Luckily Pokey knows how to stay clear of them, he found five Russell's vipers around our house in the past 10 days; interesting how these snakes all come out at once in specific seasons (the Russell's on the run now in March sure seems to tie in with the appearance of babies in July). With scrub forest behind us and rice fields in front of us, we are on Snake Highway No. 1. All the best, **Rom Whitaker**, Draco Films, Draco Books, P.O. Box 21, Chengalpattu 603001, India.

Thank you for covering the important issue of military planes leaving Guam without being inspected for Brown Treesnakes (*Boiga irregularis*) in them (Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 39(12), Dec. 2004). The inspection gap was temporarily resolved, but has reemerged in the last week (due to funding shortfalls, inspections were limited to weekdays). One minor error in the column, undoubtedly attributable to an error in the *Honolulu Advertiser* article you quoted, concerns the land area occupied by 10,000 snakes on Guam. Your squib cited 10,000 per *acre*. At the peak of the Brown Treesnake irruption in the mid 1980s, peak densities were estimated at more than 10,000 per *square mile*. Since that time the numbers have generally declined. A typical figure today might be around 15 per hectare (= 6/acre or 3840/square mile). The highest recent peak density figure that I deem credible is about 50 snakes per hectare, or about 20 per acre. Because these snakes are nocturnal and arboreal, few visitors or even residents see them. Still, 20 per acre is a remarkable density for a large snake and it contributes to the substantial likelihood that snakes will accidentally board planes or cargo that are uninspected. Nonetheless, this density is appreciably lower than that reported in the *Honolulu Advertiser* clipping. Keep up the good work; your column is always worth reading. Cheers, **Gordon Rodda**, USGS Fort Collins Science Center.

Well I hope so . . .

Thanks to my regular contributors for sending a ton of stuff and to my doctor who took yet another cyst out of my wrist making it so I couldn't type. To the rescue, riding on a pure white newt, came Commander Salamander himself the infamous Wes von Papineau—a herpetologist so renowned that whole Middle Eastern peoples have settled down and behaved themselves at the mere mention of his possible deployment. In his spare time, after settling the problems of the world, Wes cares for a houseful of amphibians—mostly with tails—and his local herp society. Bless you Wes for coming thru electronically for me one more time! But next month . . . it's back to the typewriter. So keep those whole pages of newspapers and magazines coming with their date slug and publication name still attached. Pop into a big recycled envelope, decorate profusely and mail to: Ellin Beltz, P.O. Box 1125, Ferndale, CA 95536-1125. You'll see your name here too!

Unofficial Minutes of the CHS Board Meeting, March 18, 2005

Lori King called the meeting to order at 7:31 P.M. Board member Jenny Vollman was absent.

Officers' Reports

President: Lori King announced that she will be moving to New Mexico in May. The possibility of this move had been discussed last year with the nominating committee chair and the nominee for vice-president.

Recording Secretary: Melanie Aspan read the minutes of the February 11 board meeting. Corrections were made and the minutes were accepted.

Treasurer: Jim Hoffman gave the February financial report.

Membership Secretary: Steve Spitzer announced the membership count at 642.

Corresponding Secretary: Deb Krohn asked for Bob Bavirsha's telephone number in order to pass on pertinent messages.

Sergeant-at-arms: Ron Humbert announced the attendee count for the February general meeting at 58.

Committee Reports

Shows: Steve Sullivan covered several ReptileFest issues. Steve is looking for foster homes and transportation for various trees which will be used as 'Fest decorations. He also reported that fliers are available in both English and Spanish as well as a new press release focusing on the conservation efforts of the CHS. Finally, Steve mentioned the lease agreement for this year's event as a time-sensitive issue. Bob Bavirsha complimented the graphics on this year's flier.

Salamander Safari: Ron Humbert announced that Steve Spitzer will be taking the lead during this year's event.

Esther Lewis Memorial Library: Steve Sullivan reported that the Notebaert Museum will be installing additional shelves in his office to allow more rotation options. Steve also mentioned that the security bag is in place for the computer and thanked Sean Bober for his recent work on the library check-out system.

Adoptions: Linda Malawy announced that it has been a busy turtle month. Recently 16 red eared sliders have come in.

General Meetings: Sean Bober will be sending reminders that the Herp of the Month for March is the bearded dragon. Jack Schoenfelder suggested a "novelty herp of the month." March's short presentation on the bullsnake will be presented by Mike Dloogatch. Deb Krohn volunteered to do the short presentation in April. Jack Schoenfelder brought up the new

CHS logo polo shirts which have been ordered and will be available for sale in time for ReptileFest. Jack offered to temporarily handle the ordering and sale of this merchandise.

Grants: Lori King announced that the 2005 grants have been awarded. Recipients' names and a description of their studies will be in the March *Bulletin*.

New Business

Proposal from Dave McGowan: CHS member Dave McGowan gave a short presentation introducing the www.midwestfrogs.com website. He expressed an interest in this website becoming a joint activity with the CHS. Recurring monthly costs related to maintaining the website were discussed along with the possibility of applying for grants which would make the site self-sustaining. Mike Dloogatch made a motion that in support of the CHS mission of education and conservation as of this date the webpage www.midwestfrogs.com will become an entity of the Chicago Herpetological Society. Ron Humbert seconded. The motion passed with Linda Malawy voting against, Betsy Davis abstaining and all others in favor.

Old Business

State Reptile/Amphibian: Ron Humbert reported that the Illinois House of Representatives has voted to pass this Bill. The Bill will now go to the Senate. Steve Sullivan reported that the Senate is currently on a break and the Bill will not be voted on until the end of April.
Annual Award Plaques: Betsy Davis has ordered the award plaques for presentation at the March general meeting.

Esther Lewis Memorial Plaque: Betsy Davis will also be working on this project.

Venomous Display at Educational Events: The Board reviewed the protocol drawn up and presented by Lori King. This protocol would govern the manner in which venomous animals are handled at CHS events if it is decided that this is an area into which the CHS would like to grow. Each board member was asked to express their opinion in an open discussion. Some of the positive aspects of fulfilling this proposal included a more rounded education program and a chance to present a more complete display of Illinois reptiles and amphibians. Some of the negative aspects of allowing venomous animals to be displayed included concern over safe handling procedures as well as possible negative public perception of such displays. Linda Malawy made a motion to invite Rob Carmichael to display at the Herps of Illinois exhibit at ReptileFest 2005 the following snakes: copperhead, *Agkistrodon contortrix*; cottonmouth, *Agkistrodon piscivorus*; timber rattlesnake, *Crotalus horridus*; eastern massasauga, *Sistrurus c. catenatus*. Betsy Davis seconded the motion. Sean Bober, Betsy Davis, Deb Krohn, Linda Malawy and Lori King, exercising Jenny Vollman's proxy, voted in favor. Melanie Aspan, Mike Dloogatch, Jim Hoffman, Ron Humbert, Steve Spitzer and Steve Sullivan voted against. The motion did not pass.

New Insurance Policy: Steve Spitzer recapped the current policy as covering BOD insurance at $1,215 and liability coverage at $1,709 which would cover 6 shows during one year—each lasting up to 3 consecutive days—coming to an annual premium of $2,924. Any additional shows would be covered at an additional $285 apiece. Linda recapped the new policy as covering liability for an unlimited number of shows each year for an annual premium of $3,902. Coverage that would allow venomous animals to be displayed would cost an additional $500. BOD insurance would cost an additional $1,500.

Linda Malawy made a motion to stay with the current BOD insurance. The motion was passed with all in favor.

Jim Hoffman made a motion to go with the new policy from Capitol Specialty Insurance through Adrian N. Baker & Co. covering liability for an annual premium of $3,902 and cancel the current policy. Ron Humbert seconded and the motion was passed with Steve Spitzer and Mike Dloogatch opposed and all others in favor.

Round table

Jennifer Spitzer announced that the Notebaert show on the weekend of April 23–24 coincides with the Park District show at Humboldt Park on that Sunday. Jennifer asked that anyone interested in displaying at either of these shows see her or Jenny Vollman to sign up.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:51 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Melanie Aspan, Recording Secretary.

Herpetology 2005

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editor assumes full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

POSSIBLE NEW *PSAMMOPHIS* SPECIES

L. Luiselli et al. [2004, Amphibia–Reptilia 25(4):415-423] note that snakes of the genus *Psammophis* are widespread in diverse habitats of west Africa, from dry savannas to moist rainforests. In southern Nigeria, *P. phillipsi* occurs in two "forms," one with a divided cloacal shield (CSD) and one with an entire cloacal shield (CSE). In a recent review these "forms" were suggested to be possibly distinct species. However, as no data were available on the variation in natural history, if any, between these two supposed species, the authors collected data on local distribution and natural history traits of these "forms" in several localities of southern Nigeria. Out of 32 localities examined, sympatric CSD and CSE specimens occurred in 28.1% of the localities, CSD specimens alone occurred in 68.8%, and CSE specimens alone occurred in 3.1%. At five additional localities, where a higher number of specimens was examined (range 21–41 specimens), CSD specimens were clearly dominant over CSE specimens (on average 88.8% of specimens in each population), independently of the habitat types, and there was no apparent effect of longitude on the frequency of occurrence of CSD specimens. Both "forms" proved to be habitat generalists (often inhabiting deforested areas and suburbs), and very similar in terms of type of prey eaten (mainly *Agama* lizards and *Mabuya* skinks, but also small mammals), and apparently also in terms of micro-habitats used for foraging (clearings into forested zones). Overall, there was no evident difference between these "forms" in terms of the main ecological traits examined here.

WESTERN DIAMONDBACK REPRODUCTIVE ECOLOGY

E. N. Taylor and D. F. DeNardo [2005, Copeia 2005(1): 152-158] studied the reproductive ecology of a population of western diamond-backed rattlesnakes (*Crotalus atrox*) in south-central Arizona for four active seasons using radiotelemetry and portable ultrasonography. Snakes mate in the spring and fall, and females undergo vitellogenesis exclusively in the spring, ovulate in the early summer, and give birth in the late summer. Although parturition occurs at the same time of year in all rattlesnake species studied, females of most species initiate vitellogenesis in the fall, and it is unusual for females to delay this process until the spring. No females gave birth more than once in this study, indicating that reproduction is less than annual. Litter sizes range from 2 to 7 neonates (mean = 4.5). The sex ratio of the neonates was approximately equal, but male neonates were longer in snout–vent length and heavier than female neonates. There was no significant relationship between maternal snout–vent length and clutch mass, number of neonates, mean neonate mass, or mean neonate snout–vent length. Maternal postparturient mass was positively correlated with mean neonate mass, but not the other variables.

PYGMY RATTLESNAKE DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR

X. Glaudas et al. [2005, Copeia 2005(1):196-200] note that the pygmy rattlesnake, *Sistrurus miliarius*, frequently bites humans in the southeastern United States. They used a large population of *S. miliarius* in central Florida to investigate the importance of several factors on the defensive behavior of this species. Upon detection of a snake, its snout was tapped with a gloved hand. Whether the snake struck or fled was recorded. A large sample size (N = 336) allowed the authors to make strong conclusions regarding the defensive behavior of this rattlesnake species. Of the 336 different snakes tested over the course of this study, 255 (75.9%) did not strike or flee when threatened. They usually remained in the position where found and did not visibly respond to stimuli. Another 54 (16.1%) fled but did not strike, 13 (3.9%) struck and fled, and 14 (4.1%) struck but did not flee. Overall, only 27 snakes (8%) bit the glove indicating that this species is rather nonaggressive. Initial posture was the only factor that influenced striking behavior; uncoiled snakes struck significantly more than coiled snakes. Fleeing behavior was affected by three variables: sex; whether the snake was about to shed; and initial posture. Females fled more often than males, as did snakes about to shed. Initial posture is the only factor that affected both response variables, and uncoiled individuals were more likely to flee than coiled snakes.

ROSY BOA MOVEMENT AND SPACE USE

J. E. Diffendorfer et al. [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):24-36] studied the movement ecology of coastal rosy boas (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*) by radio-tracking 17 animals across four sites for up to four years. The typical movement pattern included many short distance moves with rare long distance movements. These skewed distributions made the mean a poor descriptor of movement and this is likely a common issue in other studies. Sexes had similar movement patterns and moved less frequently and shorter distances per day during cooler seasons. Rare long-distance movements occurred primarily in the spring. Propensity to move and mean distance moved per day varied across sites. Home-range size increased with additional fixes even after four years and had a seasonal pattern, increasing during warmer seasons and remaining stable or shrinking during cooler seasons. Despite using novel habitat in sequential years, nearly all individuals used the same general area over longer periods of time. Finally, individuals of both sexes had high levels of spatial overlap. The results indicate for *L. t. roseofusca*: (1) Individual variability in movement is more the rule than the exception; (2) Common seasonal patterns in movement and space use do exist; (3) Home-range sizes vary through time yet remain in the same general location; and (4) A lack of territoriality and considerable overlap in space use exist.

FLORIDA WORM LIZARD GENETICS

A. Mulvaney et al. [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):118-124] note that the Florida worm lizard (*Rhineura floridana*) is the only extant representative of the suborder Amphisbaenia occurring in the United States and the only living representative of the Rhineuridae. The authors updated the known distribution of this species from 510 records with known localities. They further examined geographic genetic structure within this species using 1360 bp of mitochondrial DNA sequence data from 18 samples of *R. floridana*. Results suggest an ancient divergence between populations in the north-central Florida peninsula from populations in the south-central peninsula. High genetic distances are observed within south-central populations, whereas genetic structure within northern populations is less discrete and characterized by much shallower divergences. South-central populations may be candidates for taxonomic recognition (or recognition as distinct management units) if additional genetic and morphological data support these results.

THE WAY TO A PYTHON'S HEART?

J. B. Andersen et al. [2005, Nature 434:37-38 (03 March)] report that oxygen consumption by carnivorous reptiles increases enormously after they have eaten a large meal in order to meet metabolic demands, and this places an extra load on the cardiovascular system. These authors show that there is an extraordinarily rapid 40% increase in ventricular muscle mass in Burmese pythons (*Python molurus*) a mere 48 hours after feeding, which results from increased gene expression of muscle-contractile proteins. As this fully reversible hypertrophy occurs naturally, it could provide a useful model for investigating the mechanisms that lead to cardiac growth in other animals.

LARVAL ANURANS ADJUST BUOYANCY

S. L. Rondeau and J. H. Gee [2005, Copeia 2005(1):188-195] describe the effects of substrate ingestion on gas-free specific gravity, gaseous lift factor (lung volume), and ultimately buoyancy index for larval anurans. Observations on each of *Litoria genimaculata* and *Litoria lesueuri* show larvae ingest substrate particles in similar amounts in both the field and laboratory, resulting in a significant increase in gas-free specific gravity. Experiments with *Rana septentrionalis* and *Rana sylvatica* show that the increases in gas-free specific gravity varies among different types of substrates. Silt and gravel substrates result in a greater gas-free specific gravity than either sand or detritus. Both species of *Rana* compensate for the increase in gas-free specific gravity by increasing gaseous lift factor, and the resulting buoyancy indices are similar to larvae tested in bare aquaria. Detailed experiments on *R. septentrionalis* show that, when larvae are transferred from a bare aquarium to one with silt present, silt is ingested rapidly within 3 h and the digestive tract is filled by 48 h. During this period, the close match between the increase in gas-free specific gravity and the increase in gaseous lift factor, indicates a prompt and on going degree of precision in buoyancy control. Substrate ingestion has a profound effect on gas-free specific gravity and larval anurans have evolved a mechanism to regulate buoyancy.

LED BY THE BLIND

M. J. Greenlees et al. [2005, Copeia 2005(1):184-187] state that the ability to detect and follow prey chemical trails is important for actively foraging nocturnal snakes. They investigated whether a nocturnal, ophiophagous (snake-eating) predator, the bandy-bandy (*Vermicella annulata*) can detect and follow blindsnake chemical trails. Adult bandy-bandys were offered the choice between control trails (distilled water) and chemical trails from three sympatric squamate species. Bandy-bandys ignored distilled water trails and the trails of the burrowing yellow-bellied three-toed skink (*Saiphos equalis*) and the nocturnal golden crowned snake (*Cacophis squamulosus*). In contrast, all of the bandy-bandys followed chemical trails from the blackish blindsnake (*Ramphotyphlops nigrescens*), and three snakes followed the blindsnake trails along their entire length (mean distance followed = 0.93 m, range 0.2–1.4 m). The results suggest bandy-bandys use chemical cues to locate blindsnakes but do not respond to chemical trails of other sympatric squamate species.

WOOD TURTLE DECLINE

C. Daigle and J. Jutras [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):130-132] used mark–recapture methodologies to estimate the number of adult wood turtles (*Glyptemys insculpta*) inhabiting an agricultural site in southern Quebec, Canada. Two estimates, made seven years apart, revealed that the adult population declined by 50% during this period. Different hypotheses likely to explain this situation are discussed, and, although none seems more likely than the others, the data suggest that this decline resulted from increased adult mortality and poor recruitment.

INTRUDER DETECTION BY RED-BACKED SALAMANDERS

S. B. Martin et al. [2005, Herpetologica 61(1):29–35] report that previous research has shown that red-backed salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*) are able to detect the unseen presence of conspecifics through pheromones left on the substratum. The authors conducted an experiment with territorial males to determine if they can also detect volatile (or airborne) components of pheromones from male and female intruders. By placing pheromone-laden substrata from source males and females inside or outside a perforated Petri dish, the authors found that males respond aggressively towards male pheromones inside the dish relative to a control and nose tapped dishes containing both source males' and females' pheromones more than the control. No evidence was found that residential males could differentiate between volatile components of males' and females' pheromones, but they responded more aggressively towards males' than towards females' pheromones when they had direct access to pheromone-laden substrata. These data suggest that territorial males need not patrol their small territories in search of intruders but can detect such intruders through volatile components of their pheromones. Direct contact with pheromones on the substratum may be necessary for males to differentiate between male and female intruders.

NASAL STRUCTURE OF ALDABRA TORTOISES

J. Gerlach [2005, Herpetological Journal 15(1):15-20] describes the nasal structure of the western Indian Ocean *Dipsochelys* giant tortoises. These tortoises are known to possess structures facilitating "nasal drinking." Additional unique nasal features include the processus dorsalis vomerinus supporting an enlarged medial nasal gland and a "tuberculum palatinum." The medial nasal gland can be considered homologous to the vomeronasal organ (Jacobson's organ) and is connected directly to the tuberculum palatinum in the buccal cavity through the foramina praepalatina. An homologous vomeronasal organ with a direct buccal connection is also identified in existing literature accounts of the leatherback turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* and may have been overlooked in other Chelonia.

AMPHIBIANS OF SOUTHEASTERN GUINEA

M.-O. Rödel et al. [2004, Herpetozoa 17(3/4):99-118] report on the amphibians of six forest and mountain areas in southeastern Guinea. Three forest reserves (Déré, Diécké, Mont Béro) have been recently surveyed through a Rapid Assessment Program (RAP), organized by Conservation International. For three other sites (Nimba Mountains, Ziama, Pic de Fon) the authors reviewed literature records and analyzed specimens from the Museum Koenig collection in Bonn. In total 73 amphibian species have been recorded for southeastern Guinea. The number of recorded species per area ranged from 29 to 58, and the percentage of species endemic to the Upper Guinea forest zone (in total 39 species) from 42 to 53%. Several species are discussed in more detail. The high number of "farmbush" species, recorded in all areas, is a clear hint of the very degraded nature of the few remaining Guinean forest areas, particularly that of Déré. The authors emphasize the importance of the whole area as one of Africa's hottest hotspots, strongly recommend increased forest conservation activities, and stress the particular need for more detailed field work on the endemic amphibian species.

PREDATOR CUES AFFECT LARVAL DEVELOPMENT

M. J. Smith et al. [2005, Copeia 2005(1):169-173] note that the presence of predators can induce changes in the morphology and behavior of the potential prey. Their study examined the effects of different predator-induced changes in water chemistry experienced during the egg stage on larval development in the gray treefrog, *Hyla versicolor*. The potential predators of amphibian eggs and tadpoles used in this study included larval odonates, crawfish, and leeches. Tadpoles from eggs exposed to leech-induced changes in water chemistry were consistently smaller throughout their larval development than the tadpoles in the control and other potential predator treatments. Size at metamorphosis did not differ significantly among treatments, but the tadpoles in the leech treatment were significantly older at metamorphosis than tadpoles in the other treatments. These results highlight some of the potential fitness consequences for larval *H. versicolor* that received predator cues during the egg stage.

ECOLOGY OF EASTERN SPADEFOOT TOADS

C. H. Greenberg and G. W. Tanner [2005, Herpetologica 61(1):20–28] note that effective amphibian conservation must consider population and landscape processes, but information at multiple scales is rare. They explore spatial and temporal patterns of breeding and recruitment by eastern spadefoot toads (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*), using nine years of data from continuous monitoring with drift fences and pitfall traps at eight ephemeral ponds in longleaf pine-wiregrass sandhills. Breeding events (25 adults at a pond within a month) occurred 23 times on nine occasions at seven of the eight study ponds, but substantial recruitment (100 metamorphs) followed only five events. Recruitment ranged from 0 to 4648 among ponds. Only four ponds functioned as population "sources", and only during some years. The other ponds, and even "source" ponds during some years, functioned either as "sinks," where breeding occurred with no resulting recruitment, or were not used at all for breeding. Most recruitment occurred during four years. Recruitment was correlated with adult breeding effort, but only during some years. Recaptures were rare, and inter-pond exchange of adults was minimal and short-distance (< 130 m; one was 416 m). Most (83.5%) individuals captured were metamorphs, and 15.9% were 51 mm (est. 4 yr). Lifespan was conservatively estimated at 7 yrs. Adult "population" trends clearly reflected breeding effort rather than numbers per se; capture rates fluctuated dramatically among years, but showed no overall trends during the 9-yr study. This paper provides empirical information that can be used to generate realistic metapopulation models for *S. holbrookii* as a tool in conservation planning.

EGG SIZE AND TADPOLE EMBRYOS

K. Thumm and M. Mahony [2005, Herpetologica 61(1):9–19] report that the embryonic stage in the red-crowned toadlet (*Pseudophryne australis*) varies among individuals of a clutch in three important features that may be a source for selection: the length of the embryonic period (15–119 days), the stage of development at which hatching occurs (Gosner 24–36) and the size of the tadpole at hatching (21–97 mg). Previous evidence suggests that variation in the stage at hatching and the length of the embryonic period is not a facultative response to environmental cues. To ascertain whether the basis for this variation was differential maternal provisioning, these authors investigated the amount of variability in egg sizes, and then the relationship of egg size to the length of embryonic period, stage and mass at hatching. The mean coefficient of variation in egg sizes was 3.9% (range 2.5–8.5%), which is quite high when compared to other amphibians. Egg size was positively related to tadpole size at hatching, and this may have consequences for fitness. No relationship was found between egg size and stage at hatching. The relationship between egg size and length of embryonic period varied among clutches, with significant sibship effects evident. The basis for variation in stage at hatching and length of embryonic period remains unknown, but could relate to factors such as the nutritive value of yolk independent of egg size or possibly genetic factors.

LEOPARD LIZARD DEMOGRAPHICS

D. J. Germano and D. F. Williams [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):1-18] captured 1078 blunt-nosed leopard lizards (*Gambelia sila*) 2396 times between 1989 and 1994 on the Elkhorn Plain, San Luis Obispo County, California. Based on size at first capture, they caught 119 adult (> 90 mm snout–vent length [SVL]) and 430 hatchling/juvenile (< 90 mm SVL) males, and 139 adult and 390 hatchling/juvenile females. Sex ratio of males to females was 1.04 (549 males/529 females). Adult *G. sila* generally became active in April, and activity remained relatively high into July. Hatchlings were first noted in either July or August and generally could be found until early November, except in 1990 when no hatchlings were found at any time. Mean number of adults and hatchlings found active each day differed significantly across years, but as many as 32 adults and 42 hatchlings were seen on a plot during a census. Estimates of population abundance on a plot also varied yearly from 20 to 164 adults and from 0 to 273 hatchling/juveniles and seemed to be affected either by too little or too much rain. Differences in daily activity varied and were moderately well explained by environmental factors. Based on estimated survivorship, 29.0% of hatchlings from 1992 survived to 1993, and 14.6% of hatchlings from 1993 survived to 1994. The oldest *G. sila* found was a female estimated to be 4 years, 10 months when last caught, although most adults were not seen after 2 yr. Growth of individuals varied by year: highest growth rates were for lizards that hatched in 1991 and 1992, and lowest growth occurred in lizards that hatched in 1989. Adult leopard lizards with eggs were found in all years but 1990. Females generally were gravid by late April or early May, and some females were found with eggs in early July. Female size at first reproduction was about 90 mm SVL, clutch size ranged from 1 to 6 eggs, and overall mean clutch size regardless of year or clutch order was 3.4 eggs. Many females produced multiple clutches in a year, and up to four clutches by a single female were found.

COSTS OF GROWTH IN TORTOISES

T. K. Brown et al. [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):19-23] note that the metabolic cost of growth in reptiles has been difficult to detect in many previous studies. The authors designed experiments to detect and quantify added costs of growth by comparing daily energy expenditures of young, growing desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) with similar-sized, but adult, parrot-beaked tortoises (*Homopus areolatus*). They measured both field (outdoors, semicaptive) and standard (20°, 25° and 30°C) metabolic rates of each species in groups matched for body size to minimize body size effects. Mass-adjusted field metabolic rates of the juvenile tortoises were not higher but were, in fact, significantly lower (by 29%) than in adult tortoises. Standard metabolic rates did not differ between species at any temperature, thus failing to support the hypothesized higher energetic costs of growth in the juvenile tortoises. These results, although contrary to expectations, support a growing body of evidence, suggesting that the cost of growth in juvenile reptiles does not increase their field energy expenditures above those expected for adults.

CRYPTIC BEHAVIOR IN LEOPARD FROGS

D. A. Croshaw [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):125-129] notes that animals susceptible to predation sometimes engage in crypsis to conceal themselves from predators. Such behavior often consists of background color matching via substrate choice. Intraspecific color variation may result in differential substrate preference among color morphs. This idea was investigated using juvenile northern leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*), which exhibit either green or brown background color. Both color morphs spent more time on dark, concealing substrates than light, revealing ones and hopped less frequently when located on dark, concealing substrates. Frogs did not respond differently to green and brown fabric substrates, and they preferred brown natural substrates over green ones. Because green and brown frogs did not behave differently in any experiment, this study suggests that juvenile northern leopard frogs exhibit a generalized cryptic behavior pattern independent of background body color.

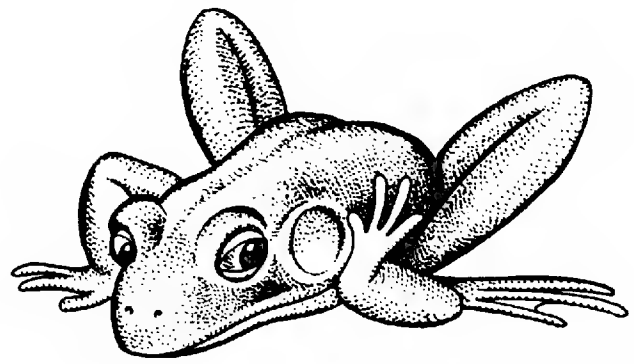
THERMOREGULATION IN BROWN TREESNAKES

N. L. Anderson et al. [2005, J. Herpetology 39(1):82-90] observe that few studies have focused on the thermal biology of tropical or nocturnal snakes. The authors recorded preferred body temperatures (T_b) of seven brown treesnakes (*Boiga irregularis*) in the laboratory and compared these to operative temperatures obtained with copper models and T_bs obtained by radiotelemetry from 11 free-ranging snakes on Guam. Operative temperatures on Guam did not vary across refuge types, unless the site received direct solar radiation. In a thermal gradient and on Guam, brown treesnakes thermoregulated around two distinct temperature ranges (21.3–24.9°C; 28.1–31.3°C). In the gradient, brown treesnakes exhibited elevated T_b into the higher range only in the evening. On Guam, snakes achieved T_bs in the high range only when direct solar radiation was available during the afternoon, a period when snakes were inactive. Higher mean T_bs on sunny days corresponded with observations of basking behavior.

AMERICAN CROCODILES IN BELIZE

S. G. Platt et al. [2004, Herpetological Bulletin 89:26-32] investigated the status of the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) in Turneffe Atoll, Belize, during 2002 and 2004. A combination of spotlight surveys and counts of recently hatched nests were used to census the crocodile population. A total of 49 crocodiles were observed along 40.1 km of survey route (1.2 crocodiles/km) during spotlight surveys in 2002. This encounter rate was not significantly different from that reported in surveys conducted during the mid-1990s. Eight and 20 recently hatched nests were found in 2002 and 2004, respectively. The number of nests found in 2004 exceeds the previously reported maximum count of 15, suggesting that recruitment of breeding females into the population may be occurring. Crocodile nests were found at four sites in Turneffe Atoll. The most significant nesting beach in Belize is located on Northern Cay and currently threatened by a proposed tourist development. Failure to protect this beach could have potentially devastating consequences for *C. acutus* in Belize.

The Tympanum



We joined the CHS last November, and I have to say the Salamander Safari we went on today was worth so much more than the year's membership! It was a great day for our family. Our kids really got into finding all the salamanders and having so many knowledgable people around was great. It was a great day and I really want to thanks all of those who spent the time and effort which made this possible!

My daughter has been passing out flyers for the herp fest at school, and we are really looking forward to the next event! See you at the fest! **Claudia Naue, 4303 N. Kildare, Chicago IL 60641**.

Hi to All and Welcome to the Naue family!

I wholeheartedly agree, it was an amazing day of discovery! For those who weren't able to attend we had one find that topped all others. Leave it to the kids to be the most persistent and inquisitive. Ten-year-old Stuart Naue lifted a piece of plywood about a foot square that was lying just inside the edge of the water of a smallish marshy area / vernal pool. Now this was after a number of us adults had gone through lifting everything in sight. Well, upon lifting it, he exclaimed something along the lines of "Holy Cow!" which brought the rest of us in the vicinity dashing over. Under this board was a writhing mass of 21 blue-spotted salamanders and 3 spotted salamanders! A sight I imagine most of us will not encounter again. The sight was seen by all and there were so many salamanders that there was a bit of confusion over how to count them.

Thankfully, there were some plastic plant pots lying nearby, compliments of the nearby homes lining this beautiful woods, and we decided to scoop them up one by one into one of these containers. After everyone had a good look several of us took them 1, 2 or 3 at a time and placed them right back in the spot they came from while counting them out loud. We carefully replaced the board, with a bit of bark under the edge so no one would be crushed and off we went back to the nature center.

Now the normal (and safer) procedure, per Ron Humbert's pre-hunting lesson, would be to replace the board first and then allow the critters to disembark one's hand at the edge of the home and crawl back under, but the call to leave was announced and there were so many "sallies" that in our excitement we forgot procedure and focused on getting them back together, the way we found them. Do let it be noted though, we were very careful to do it correctly with the other 50+ amphibians we found. And each of those finds came in groups of 1, 2 or 3 at a time—Oh, and one find had 6!

Steve Spitzer had the honor of finding the first spotted salamander, which he pointed out had a split toe on one front foot, making it look like it had five toes instead of the normal four. He made sure to advise just where he found it, more in the water than out, then we all had great success. I do not know the final count of blue-spotteds and spotteds but I believe there were at least 5 or 6 big, beefy spotteds, the rest being various sizes of blue-spotteds, many of which were also quite chubby.

Besides these amazing finds, there were several non-herp finds that brought excitement. Young Miss Elizabeth Naue discovered a number of salamanders as well, and an interesting ancient beer bottle, which she was kind enough to haul out of the woods, and several bones of a long-departed deer. Which, by the sound of things, will be treasured by this young nature enthusiast. I found an interesting set of lower jawbones that came together in a narrow point, still connected at the front, and this was identified as an opposum jaw. Someone in the other half of the hunting party found an arrowhead in the woods. It was a little early for spring flowers but I did note some greenish tips attempting to rise from the chilly earth under a number of logs that we rolled over, and one site had a profusion of skunk cabbages. There were lots of earthworms and snails providing a bounty of meals for our amphibian friends. There was a wonderful spirit of cooperation and shared enthusiasm as we worked to roll log after log while still keeping everyone in sight throughout our roaming. I had a pair of inexpensive walkie-talkies that came in handy between the two groups so we could give a shout about our finds and be in sync with each other's game plans. There were a number of scraps of plywood already laid out in and around the water's edge to provide hide spots for salamanders. This made for some easy discovery for those not inclined to grab logs and roll 'em.

A cute little spring peeper with copper eyes was found quietly sitting under a log by the water's edge at the preserve and I believe a few other frogs were found. I wish I knew more about what else was found but I can only report what I observed. While our group of a dozen plus Dave and Deb from the forest preserve were searching the remote sites (a short drive away) others stayed behind and did shorter excursions with Ron Humbert, Steve Sullivan and several of the boy scouts from his troop. If anyone has the final count of critters I'm very curious to hear it. Even if we'd had a hard time finding anything outdoors that day, there was a huge array of specimens to observe in the comfort of the spacious library room at the Plum Creek Nature Center. It was like a mini-ReptileFest!

The forest preserve naturalists are to be commended for their graciousness and knowledge. And as usual, Ron and Dottie Humbert helped make this a friendly and awesome learning experience. Thanks to the Spitzers for their knowledge, friendship, and doing the donut run, and generously distributing the rest to everyone else at the end of the day. And thanks to anyone else who brought fine specimens and worked to make this happen. It was truly a memorable experience! **Michelle Nash, 5N279 Sanctuary Ln, St. Charles IL 60175**.

Advertisements

For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 6115 SW 137th Avenue, Archer FL 32618, (352) 495-9024, E-mail: GrmtRodent@aol.com.

For sale: from **The Mouse Factory**, producing superior quality, frozen feeder mice and rats. We feed our colony a nutrtionally balanced diet of rodent chow, formulated especially for us, and four types of natural whole grains and seeds. Mice starting from: pinks, $.17 each; fuzzies, $.24 each; hoppers, $.30 each; weanling, $.42; adult, $.48. Rats: starting with pinks at $.45 each, to XL at $1.80 each. Discount prices available. We accept Visa, MC, Discover or money orders. PO Box 85, Alpine TX 79831. Call **toll-free** at (800) 720-0076 or visit our website: < http://www.themousefactory.com> .

For sale: **high quality frozen feeders**. Over a decade of production and supply. Seven sizes of mice availabe: small newborn pinks up to jumbo adults. Prices start at $25 per 100. Feeders are separate in the resealable bag, not frozen together. Low shipping rates. Free price list. Kelly Haller, 4236 SE 25th Street, Topeka KS 66605, (913) 234-3358 evenings and weekends.

For sale: **New book**—*Snakes of Costa Rica* by Alejandro Solórzano, in English/Spanish, 842 color photos, 21 figs. & tables, distribution maps for all species, a must for anyone with an interest in tropical snakes, $60 + $5 shipping & handling. Also available, *Biology of the Vipers* (2002, Schuett et al., eds.) Order from Eagle Mountain Publishing, LC, 7705 N. Wyatt Earp Ave., Eagle Mountain UT 84043, (801) 789-4149 tel., (801) 789-4150 fax. E-mail: empub@msn.com. For additional information see www.eaglemountainpublishing.com

For sale: books. *Australia's North* by Stanley and Kay Breeden, 1975, 208 pp., handsomely illustrated with many color and b&w photos (some full-page) including the frill-necked lizard, monitors, olive python, geckos and many other herps, hardbound, DJ, $35; *Snakes & Lizards of Australia* by David McPhee, 1963 (2nd ed.), 125 pp., many b&w photos, pocket-size book, softbound, spine slightly scuffed, $26; *Australian Reptiles in Colour* by Harold Cogger, 1967, 112 pp., 50 excellent color photos of herps in their native habitat, DJ somewhat frayed, hardbound, $15; *The Birds of San Diego County* by Philip Unitt, 1984, 276 pp., 12 water color plates by Allan Brooks, range maps, softbound, $29; *International Zoo Yearbooks*, hardbound, DJ, special sections noted, Volume 11 (1971)—marsupials, Volume 14 (1974)—trade and transport of animals, $60 per volume. All books in excellent condition except as noted. Postage $2.50 for orders under $25, free for orders $25 or more. William R. Turner, 7395 S. Downing Circle W., Littleton CO 80122. Phone (303) 795-5128. E-mail: toursbyturner@aol.com.

For sale: Two 1-foot Neodesha cage sets, each set includes matching hide box and water bowl, $25 per set. Jim, (847) 534-4980.

For sale: Louisiana pinesnakes. Second and third generation from locality specific animals, 2003 & 2004 babies available, $250–400 each. Theron Magers, (318) 793-9413. E-mail: theronm@kricket.net.

For sale: Now accepting reservations for rare and unusual garters—**Eastern**: normal $25 each/2 for $40, Florida $25 each/2 for $40,silver hets/possible het granite $75, granites (axanthic) $150, granite hets $75, albinos $195–$250, hets $95, possible hets $45, flame × albino $125, erythristic × albino $125, flames $100, erythristic $100, melanistic $35, snows $395; **Red-sided**: normals $25 each/2 for $40, albinos $375, het and possible het albino—inquire, double het snow $225 pair, anerythristic $100, het anerythistic $50; **Plains**: normal $25 each/2 for $40, anerythristic $40, double het snow $50, albino (Nebraska albino × red Iowa albino) ?, axanthic $95, albinos/snows market, quad hets $75, red albino $125, red albino hets $40, Christmas albino $125, super Christmas albino $175, hybino $195, possible het hybino $35, piebald inquire; **Wandering**: normals $25 each/2 for $40, chocolate $75, melanistics $95, chocolate × melanistic $45 each, albinos $150, het albinos $50; **California red-sided** $125, **Eastern black-necked** $95, **Florida blue-striped (*similis*)** $40, **Santa Cruz** $60. Scott Felzer, (919) 365-6120 EST. E-mail: sfelzersgarters@bellsouth.net www.gartersnakemorphs.com

For sale: c.b. '03 yellow anacondas, aggressive feeders, perfect health, about 2' long, $100 each; also c.b. '04 reticulated pythons; beautiful hatchlings already feeding on adult mice. These guys are tiger siblings and are available for $100/each as well. Personal checks, money orders and Paypal accepted. Out of state shipping available. If you have questions or would like to purchase an animal call Mark Petros, (847) 836-9426 or E-mail ballpython777@yahoo.com.

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Reptile Show: Captive-bred only. Monona Community Center, 1011 Nichols Road, Madison WI. Saturday, April 23, 2005, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., $4 admission, $2 under 12. Vendors tables, $25. Info: wireptileshows@hotmail.com or (608) 238-2891

Virtual Museum of Natural History at www.curator.org: Free quality information on animals—emphasis on herps—plus expedition reports, book reviews and links to solid information. Always open, always free.

Wanted: Female ball pythons, adults preferred but smaller animals also considered. I am a professional breeder specializing in ball pythons and I can assure you that your animal will be provided with excellent care and optimal living conditions. Mark Petros, (847) 836-9426; ballpython777@yahoo.com.

Wanted: I'm looking for my soulmate. I want to settle down to a family before it is too late. But I have this problem. . . . When we get into hobbies and interests: old popular records, jazz and show tunes, and antique electronics are fine, but when I mention turtles, "What, are you crazy?" So maybe this is a better place to look. Please don't try to separate me from my turtles—at least not most of them. If interested, please drop a line to Ellis Jones, 1000 Dell, Northbrook IL 60062, telling a bit about yourself and giving a phone number.

Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members—$2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (773) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail: MADadder0@aol.com.

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN REPTILEFEST 2005

What a great weekend! Thank-you to all the CHS members and invited institutions who made ReptileFest 2005 such a success. Thank-you also to our sponsors, ZooMed and Timberline, and to all of the vendors whose financial support made the event possible. More than 45 of the displays at 'Fest were created and staffed by members of the CHS, there were 14 displays by nonprofit organizations and we had 12 vendors. Despite the good outdoor weather we had a record number of guests at 'Fest—over 3,800 people.

We had many interesting and informative displays and several first-time exhibitors. Thanks to all of you who put so much work into your exhibits, made your animals and expertise available, and who persevered through two days of on-your-feet public interaction. And, an extra thanks to everyone who helped with set-up and take-down. Many of you worked nearly 'round the clock for almost three days.

Finally, thanks to the ReptileFest committee who have volunteered their time since last September to bring all of the pieces together to create such a great show.

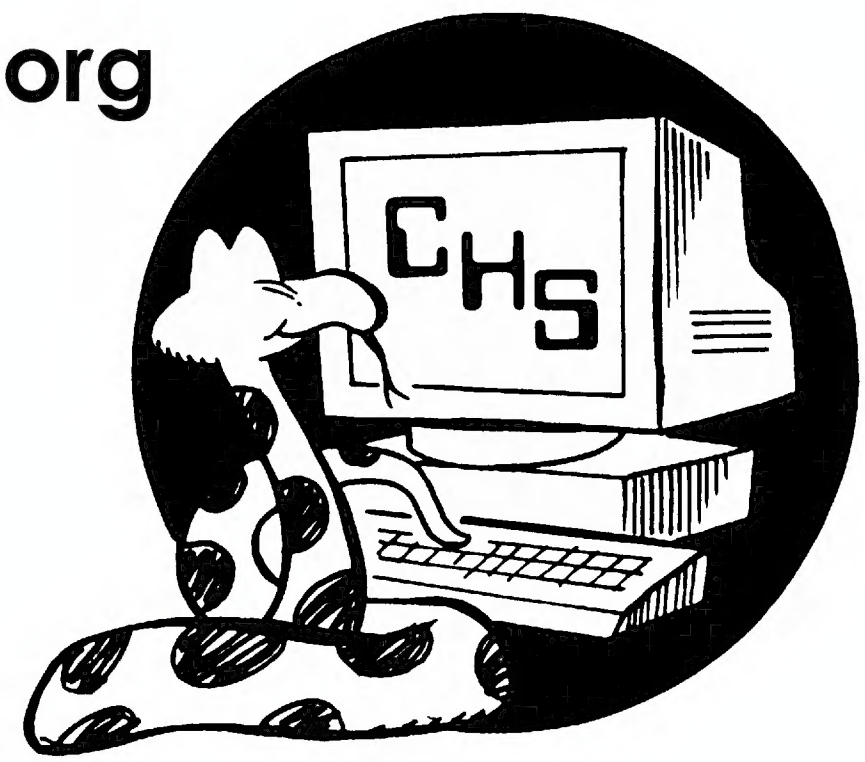
As those of you who exhibited saw, ReptileFest is an important way to educate the public about reptiles and amphibians. Because ReptileFest is a strictly educational show, we reach a lot of demographics that might not ever come in such close contact with the organisms we love. As a result, we are able to help correct misconceptions and instill an appreciation for these animals within the general public.

It's never too late to begin thinking about your exhibit at next year's ReptileFest. At the next general meeting we will announce the winners of this year's people's choice, exhibitor's choice, and first time exhibitor contests. I will also contact the winners directly.

Again, thank you all for participating. We hope to see all of you again at an even bigger ReptileFest 2006!

Next time you surf the WorldWide Web, crawl, run, slither, slide, jump, or hop over to the CHS web site!

www.chicagoherp.org



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Chicagoherp.org is accepting applications for banner advertisements or links from herpetoculturists and manufacturers of herp-related products. Visit the site and contact the webmaster for details on how you can sponsor CHS!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, April 27, at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Cannon Drive and Fullerton Parkway, in Chicago. **Charlie Painter**, Herpetologist, Conservation Services Division, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, will speak on "Herpetological Miscellany from New Mexico." Charlie has worked as staff herpetologist with NMDGF for 20 years. His main interests include conservation and natural history of southwestern amphibians and reptiles. Current projects include investigations of the status and distribution of sand dune lizards, Chiricahua leopard frogs, Jemez Mountains salamanders, and denning ecology of prairie rattlesnakes.

The regular monthly meetings of the Chicago Herpetological Society take place at Chicago's newest museum — the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**. This beautiful new building is at Fullerton Parkway and Cannon Drive, directly across Fullerton from the Lincoln Park Zoo. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 P.M. through 9:30 P.M. Parking is free on Cannon Drive. A plethora of CTA buses stop nearby.

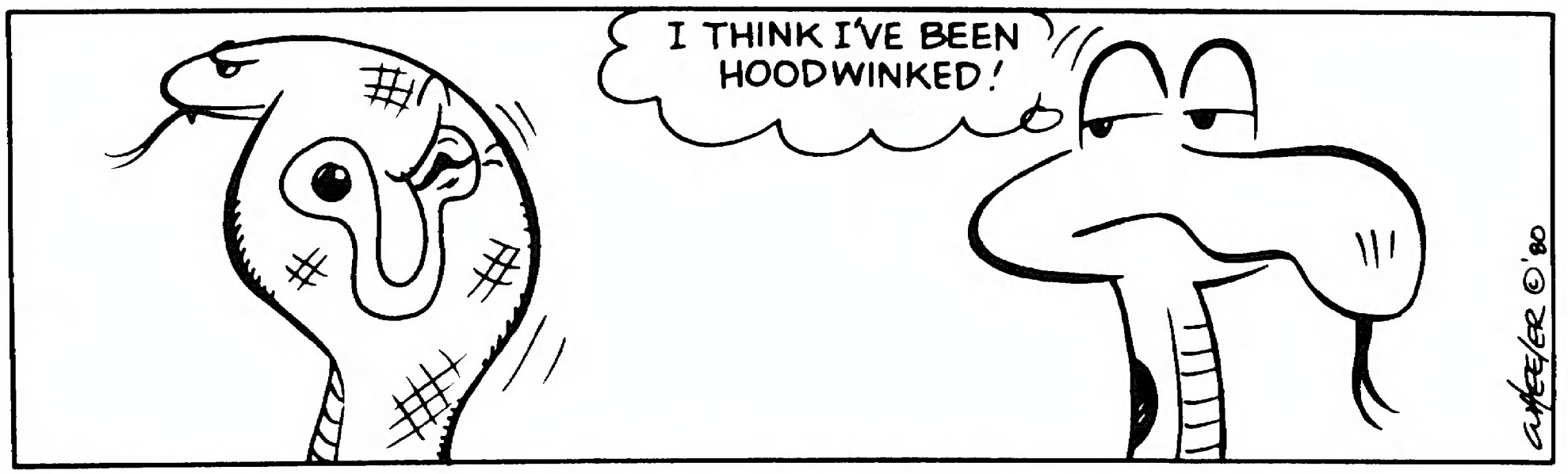
The Chicago Turtle Club

The monthly meetings of the Chicago Turtle Club are informal; questions, children and animals are welcome. Meetings normally take place at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. Parking is free. For more info call Lisa Koester, (773) 508-0034, or visit the CTC website: http://www.geocities.com/~chicagoturtle.

HERP OF THE MONTH

Each monthly meeting will showcase a different herp. CHS members are urged to bring one specimen of the "Herp of the Month" to be judged against the entries from other CHS members. Prizes will be awarded to the top three winners as follows: 1st place—6 raffle tickets at next meeting; 2nd place—4 raffle tickets at next meeting; 3rd place—2 raffle tickets at next meeting. For April **turtles** will be the Herp of the Month.

THE ADVENTURES OF SPOT



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